

CARIBBEAN TOURISM OFFICIALS TACKLE ISSUE OF AIRLINE SERVICE

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 29, 2008

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to enter into the RECORD a July 15, 2008 New York Carib News article entitled: "CARICOM Heads Tourism Talk."

The article speaks of the challenges that the tourism-based Caribbean economy is facing due to high oil prices and a "17 percent cut-back on airline services from the United States." Caribbean officials are meeting the challenge of protecting their most profitable industry by gearing up to market the Caribbean as a brand by "looking at the Caribbean as a single space." There have also been talks of combining the regional civil aviation authorities.

Increasingly, Caribbean officials are recognizing the need to unite some of their services in order to increase the viability of their tourism industry in the midst of rising oil prices. One of the discussions and outcomes of the successful New York CARICOM Conference was the possibility of Jet Blue, the popular discount airline, providing service to the Caribbean. With Jet Blue, the Caribbean can regain the much needed air service that is being lost due to high oil prices.

CARICOM HEADS TOURISM TALK

ST JOHN'S, ANTIGUA, CMC—Caribbean Community (CARICOM) leaders began deliberations focusing on the tourism sector that has been a key contributor to their countries' economies.

There are concerns that recent global developments, such as the rising cost of fuel and changes in flight schedules by US-based airlines, could undermine the viability of an industry that provides thousands of jobs for Caribbean nationals.

The leaders will hear special presentations by St. Lucia's Tourism Minister and Chairman of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) Allan Chastenet and his Antigua and Barbuda counterpart, Harold Lovell, on efforts to make the sector more competitive in light of the new threats, including a 17 percent cutback in airline services from the United States, the region's main tourism market.

Chastenet told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) that oil prices were expected to reach an estimated US\$170 a barrel and that this could also be accompanied by a 20 percent cut in capacity by the US airlines industry.

"Clearly, as the price of oil continues to increase, that may get more serious," he said.

The CTO Chairman said that the presentation would again emphasize the need for branding the Caribbean, adding a "brand is just not marketing, it is a promise".

"Unfortunately we have not done that," he said, adding that the introduction of the satellite accounting system to measure the economic importance of the tourism industry to Caribbean countries was vital.

"Tourism is never reflected in national accounts and if something is not measurable you can't improve upon it," he said.

"We are going to do a presentation because we have now found funding to help the governments implement satellite accounting systems in each country."

The leaders will also discuss the air transportation sector, with Chastenet indicating

that the issue of establishing hubs to service the region would be on the agenda.

"Also, we would be looking at the Caribbean as a single space," he said, also noting that there is need to combine the various civil aviation authorities in the region.

"One has to consider whether we can achieve more by having one civil aviation authority that would be more cost effective and more prolific in what they are trying to achieve."

Chastenet said the crisis now confronting the tourism industry has also shown that the operations of the regional airlines are not viable. "One of the things that all of our airlines are proving in this region is that they are not economically viable, so we know that the model we have been using doesn't work and I am really hoping that we really have functional cooperation."

There should be at least a meeting a year in which the regional carriers are sitting down and trying to make sure that their schedules are coincided," he said.

"Why should a person have to leave the Bahamas and have to go the (United) States in order to come to the other parts of the Caribbean?"

"Why can't that take place through Jamaica and then down into the Eastern Caribbean. It is ridiculous that Caribbean Airlines and LIAT don't even interlock. So those are the things that we will be bringing to the Heads' attention and basically saying this is now having a negative impact on our tourism arrivals."

Host Prime Minister and CARICOM Chairman Baldwin Spencer said that increases in airfares and new airline charges were also contributing to the "bleak perspectives for the region's tourism-driven economies".

He said that while he was encouraged by the efforts of the regional airline LIAT to fill the void created by the reduction in airlift by US air carriers, it was not, however, a viable proposition. "International airlift is a present and critical problem. So, too, regional sea and air transportation for tourism and trade and personal and business travel," Spencer said.

EARMARK DECLARATION

HON. JIM SAXTON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 29, 2008

Mr. SAXTON. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Republican Earmark Guidance, I am including the following request, which has received funding in H.R. 6599.

Project: Unified Security Forces Operations Building.

Cost: \$7,400,000.

Account: Military Construction—Defense Wide.

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst Joint Base.

Address of Requesting Entity: 2901 Falcon Lane, McGuire Air Force Base, NJ 08641.

Description of Request: The joint security headquarters is designed to serve all three services and installations. This funding is for the first of two construction phases. The structure will house criminal investigation personnel, training facilities, detention and confinement areas, identification facilities, and an armory and weapons cleaning stations.

CONGRATULATING THE HUGH O'BRIAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM ON THEIR 50TH ANNI- VERSARY

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 29, 2008

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Program as they celebrate their 50th Anniversary this summer. Since its foundation, HOBY has instilled valuable leadership techniques in over 365,000 high school sophomores creating exceptional leaders for our future.

As a recipient of the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Program my sophomore year in high school, and now a proud alumnus, HOBY afforded me the honor of representing my classmates, my neighbors, and my community. It's not often a teenager gets to be an ambassador—but HOBY has given that chance to hundreds of thousands of students.

HOBY has proved to be an outstanding influence on our younger generations. Each year, with over two million volunteer hours recorded by HOBY students and volunteers, HOBY participants are making a difference. HOBY's success is also evident in the many non-profit organizations that have been created by HOBY alumni, including Food for Thought and Our Education.

HOBY Ambassadors are now recognized in more than 20 countries at the World Leadership Congress. Their program has grown to include students from Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Mexico, Israel, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea. By extending the HOBY experience internationally, it allows HOBY Ambassadors to take one step further and encourage innovative thinking.

May their mission continue to thrive as they "provide lifelong leadership development opportunities that empower youth to achieve their highest potential". Congratulations on 50 years of tremendous success.

TRIBUTE TO LINDA BLOOM AND RICHARD GAARD

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 29, 2008

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate two Iowans, Linda Bloom and Richard Gaard on being named national high school coaches of the year in their respective sports.

Linda Bloom is the Girls' Swimming and Diving coach at Marshalltown High School in Marshalltown, Iowa. She has coached the Bobcats for 22 years and has accumulated a career record of 172–36. She has been named Regional Swim Coach of the Year thirteen times and was the 1993 Iowa State Swimming Coach of the Year. Coach Bloom is the current president of the Iowa Girls and Women's Sports Committee and a member of the Board of Directors of the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union. She also coaches the Marshalltown Girls' Golf team.

Richard Gaard is the Boys' Golf coach at Decorah High School in Decorah, Iowa. He